

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 275285

EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, VN, US

SUBJECT: U.S.-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS: GUIDANCE FOR NOVEMBER
12 MEETING

REF: STATE 272198

1. OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH VIETNAMESE IS TO STRESS OUR CONCERN FOR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN AND CIVILIANS KILLED AND MISSING DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, TO URGE VIETNAMESE TO MOVE QUICKLY TO PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY ACCOUNTING FOR MIA'S AND TO RETURN REMAINS OF DEAD, AND TO REITERATE THAT WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT ON THIS ISSUE NO FURTHER PROGRESS IN IMPROVING RELATIONS IS POSSIBLE. WE WANT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT WE WILL NOT CONSIDER PROVIDING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AS THE PRICE FOR SUCH AN ACCOUNTING. WE CONSIDER THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING TO BE TO PROVIDE AN OPENING FOR THE VIETNAMESE TO ACT FAVORABLY ON THIS ISSUE. OUR POSITION IN NEW YORK ON THE REVIVED QUESTION OF UN
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MEMBERSHIP FOR VIETNAM (USUN 5018) IS CONSISTENT WITH THIS

PURPOSE.

2. WE ALSO WISH TO MAKE CLEAR THAT ONCE WE HAVE RECEIVED A SATISFACTORY MIA ACCOUNTING, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WITH THEM SPECIFIC STEPS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF

RELATIONS. WE SEE SUCH RELATIONS DEVELOPING ON A BASIS OF STRICT RECIPROCITY AND GEARED TO PRESENT AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN STERILE DEBATE OF THE PAST. WE DO NOT ACCEPT, AS THE VIETNAMESE CONTEND, THAT THE PARIS ACCORD MUST FORM THE BASIS OF OUR RELATIONS. WE WISH INSTEAD TO BEGIN A TOTALLY NEW RELATIONSHIP WHICH WILL BENEFIT BOTH SIDES EQUALLY.

3. THE VIETNAMESE WILL SEEK TO LINK THE MIA ISSUE WITH OTHER CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS OUR ALLEGED OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND TO CONSTRUCT A BROADER FRAMEWORK OF RELATIONS, POSSIBLY BUT NOT NECESSARILY EXPLICITLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT, FROM WHICH THEY WOULD EXPECT EARLY BENEFITS SUCH AS AID AND TRADE. THE VIETNAMESE WILL ALSO PROBABLY REPEAT THEIR LITANY OF THEIR "GESTURES" OF GOODWILL CONTRASTED WITH ALLEGED "HOSTILE ACTS" ON OUR PART. THEY MAY EVEN PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL "GESTURE", SUCH AS DISCUSSING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THE 12 MIAS NAMED IN THE LIST PROVIDED US SEPTEMBER 6, OR RELEASE ADDITIONAL NAMES.

4. THE U.S. RESPONSE TO THE VIETNAMESE WILL BE TO MAINTAIN OUR POSITION AS OUTLINED IN PARA 1 ABOVE. IF THE VIETNAMESE PROVIDE A FURTHER "GESTURE" ON MIAS, WE WILL OF COURSE WELCOME ANY SUCH MOVE, BUT CONTINUE TO INSIST ON A FULLY SATISFACTORY ACCOUNTING BEFORE WE TAKE FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS IMPROVED RELATIONS. IF, AS IS UNLIKELY, THE VIETNAMESE MAKE A CLEARLY MAJOR MIA GESTURE IN CONNECTION WITH THE MEETING, WE WILL WISH TO REFRAIN FROM CHARACTERIZING IT EITHER AS SUFFICIENT OR AS INSUFFICIENT PENDING CAREFUL STUDY IN WASHINGTON.

5. WE ALSO WISH TO RAISE IN A LOWER KEY, INFORMAL MANNER
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THE ISSUES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND RELATIVES OF AMERICANS WHO REMAIN IN VIETNAM. HOWEVER, WE CONSIDER THIS TO BE A SPECIFIC HUMANITARIAN QUESTION WHICH SHOULD NOT BE LINKED TO OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

6. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF OPENING STATEMENT WHICH DCM SHOULD MAKE AT MEETING, AS WELL AS REBUTTAL MATERIAL FOR USE IN RESPONSE TO EXPECTED VIETNAMESE STATEMENTS DCM

SHOULD CLOSELY FOLLOW BASIC LINES OF THE MATERIAL BELOW
IN ANY STATEMENTS REQUIRED.

7. BEGIN TEXT. LAST MARCH THE U.S. TOOK THE INITIATIVE
TO PROPOSE DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT. WE DID SO
BECAUSE WE BELIEVED THEN, AS WE DO NOW, THAT THE INTERESTS

OF PEACE AND SECURITY WOULD BENEFIT FROM PLACING THE PAST
BEHIND US AND DEVELOPING THE BASIS FOR A NEW RELATION-
SHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WE CONSIDER THAT THE
PURPOSE OF THESE PRESENT DISCUSSIONS IS TO DETERMINE
WHETHER A SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR SUCH A RELATIONSHIP EXISTS.

8. LET ME MAKE MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICY CLEAR FROM THE
OUTSET. WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH
VIETNAM. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PAST CONFLICT SHOULD
PREVENT US FROM ADDRESSING PRESENT MATTERS AT ISSUE BE-
TWEEN US OR FROM SEEKING WAYS TO ESTABLISH MORE NORMAL
RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST
AND BENEFIT. WE ENVISAGE SUCH RELATIONS AND ARE WILLING
TO WORK VIGOROUSLY TOWARD ACHIEVING THEM.

9. MY GOVERNMENT DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE BASIS FOR A
NEW RELATIONSHIP CAN BE FOUND IN PAST AGREEMENTS. NOR DO
WE BELIEVE THAT STERILE DEBATE OR RECRIMINATION OF THE
PAST CAN SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE. WE DO NOT PLAN TO
ENGAGE IN SUCH DEBATE OR RECRIMINATION HERE OR ELSEWHERE.
TO DO SO WOULD NOT ONLY BE IRRELEVANT TO THE CURRENT
SITUATION BUT WOULD IMPEDE PROGRESS TOWARD THE TYPE OF
RELATIONSHIP WE SEEK, A RELATIONSHIP WHICH MUST BEGIN
WITH RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUES NOW AT HAND.

10. FOR US, OBTAINING AN ACCOUNTING FOR AMERICANS MISSING
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IN ACTION AND THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF OUR DEAD IS
AN ISSUE OF FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE. WE HAVE REPEATEDLY
REQUESTED YOUR GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE SUCH AN ACCOUNTING
AND TO RETURN ALL RECOVERABLE REMAINS. WE HAVE PROVIDED
INFORMATION TO ASSIST YOU IN YOUR SEARCHES. WE HAVE
OFFERED TO SEND TECHNICAL TEAMS TO VIETNAM TO WORK WITH
YOUR OWN EXPERTS IN THIS EFFORT. WE HAVE ALSO PROVIDED
INFORMATION ON YOUR OWN MISSING MEN.

11. YET SO FAR ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE MORE THAN
2500 AMERICANS INVOLVED HAVE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR, DESPITE
THE CERTAINTY THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMATION ON
MANY MORE. YOUR FAILURE TO PROVIDE ALL AVAILABLE INFORMA-
TION AND TO RETURN THE REMAINS OF THE DEAD NEEDLESSLY
PROLONGS THE ANGUISH OF THE FAMILIES OF THESE MEN. WORSE

STILL, IT APPEARS TO BE A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS ANGUISH FOR YOUR OWN POLITICAL GAIN.

12. YOUR COUNTRY HAS A BASIC HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE SUCH AN ACCOUNTING. QUITE APART FROM THE SPECIFIC OBLIGATION IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT, THAT HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATION IS CLEARLY ESTABLISHED NOT ONLY IN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS SUCH AS THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF 1949, TO WHICH THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM WAS A SIGNATORY, BUT ALSO BY ALL ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN BEHAVIOR. FULFILLMENT OF THIS CLEAR LEGAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION IS A PREREQUISITE TO ANY FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

13. WE DO NOT SEEK THE IMPOSSIBLE. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT SOME OF OUR MEN WERE LOST IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT THEIR REMAINS WILL BE RECOVERED OR THAT SUBSTANTIAL INFORMATION ON THEIR FATE WILL EVER BE KNOWN. WE ASK ONLY WHAT IS HUMANE AND REASONABLE: (1) THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION NOW IN ITS POSSESSION ON AMERICANS MISSING OR DEAD DURING THE RECENT CONFLICT; (2) THAT YOU PERMIT THE RETURN OF THE RECOVERABLE REMAINS OF ALL PERSONNEL WHO EITHER DIED IN ACTION OR CAPTIVITY; (3) THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKE SERIOUS EFFORTS TO ASCERTAIN THE FATE OF

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OTHERS.

14. AS WE HAVE STATED BEFORE, WE ARE WILLING TO ASSIST THESE EFFORTS IN ANY PRACTICAL WAY. WE CAN PROVIDE FURTHER INFORMATION FROM OUR RECORDS. WE ARE WILLING TO ASSIST THE EFFORTS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS. WE ARE PREPARED TO PROVIDE PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT TO ASSIST YOUR GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS.

15. IN SUM, WHAT WE SEEK FROM YOU IS A COOPERATIVE AND FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE AND A WILLINGNESS TO TREAT IT IN THE PURELY HUMANITARIAN WAY IT DESERVES. WE REJECT ANY CONTENTION THAT AN ACCOUNTING FOR OUR MISSING MEN MUST BE BARGAINED FOR OR LINKED TO SPURIOUS ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL CLAIMS FROM THE PAST. WE RECOGNIZE NO SUCH CLAIMS, AND WE DO NOT INTEND TO BARGAIN ON THIS CLEARLY HUMANITARIAN ISSUE.

16. ON THE CONTRARY, MY GOVERNMENT VIEWS FULL RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE AS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH THE MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE TO ENABLE US TO ADDRESS AND RESOLVE OTHER MATTERS. THE TIME IS PAST FOR INCOMPLETE AND PARTIAL

GESTURES. WHEN OUR MISSING MEN HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORILY ACCOUNTED FOR, WE WILL BE PREPARED TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN US. FURTHER DELAY IN PROVIDING AN ACCOUNTING, HOWEVER, WILL ONLY DELAY ANY MOVES TOWARD THE MORE NORMAL AND RECIPROCALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP WE BOTH SEEK.

17. LET ME CONCLUDE BY REITERATING MY GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH YOUR COUNTRY. WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THE OBSTACLES TO ESTABLISHING A NEW RELATIONSHIP ARE INSURMOUNTABLE. ON THE CONTRARY, WE BELIEVE THAT MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS CAN BE ESTABLISHED. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR VIEWS ON THIS MATTER AND ASSURE YOU THAT THEY WILL RECEIVE MY GOVERNMENT'S FULL AND CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. END TEXT.

18. WE ANTICIPATE THE VIETNAMESE WILL CLAIM THAT ARTICLES 1, 4, 8B, 21, AND 22 OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT REMAIN VALID AND SHOULD FORM THE BASIS OF NORMALIZED RELATIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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YOU SHOULD REPLY ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: "AS WE HAVE STATED, WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE RATHER THAN THE PAST IN OUR RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM. SELECTIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS NOT A SUITABLE BASIS FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. AS A RESULT OF YOUR COUNTRY'S VIOLATION OF THE MOST BASIC PROVISIONS OF THIS AGREEMENT, WE CONSIDER WE HAVE NO FURTHER OBLIGATIONS UNDER IT AND IT CANNOT SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WE SEEK."

19. THE VIETNAMESE WILL ACCUSE US OF IGNORING A MORAL AND LEGAL OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE. YOU SHOULD REPLY: "WE DO NOT CONSIDER THAT WE HAVE ANY OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE SUCH AID TO VIETNAM, AND WE HAVE NO PLANS TO DO SO. OUR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER SUCH AID IN 1973 OBVIOUSLY DOES NOT COMMIT US TO CONSIDER IT NOW IN LIGHT OF THE CONQUEST OF SOUTH VIETNAM BY YOUR FORCES IN VIOLATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT".

20. THE VIETNAMESE WILL PROBABLY ACCUSE US OF SELECTIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT OURSELVES, I.E. SEEKING TO HOLD THEM TO ARTICLE 8B ON MIAS BUT IGNORING ALL OTHER PROVISIONS. YOU SHOULD RESPOND: "THE MIA QUESTION IS A HUMANITARIAN PROBLEM TOTALLY UNRELATED TO CONSIDERATION OF ECONOMIC QUESTIONS. THERE WAS NO LINKAGE IN THE AGREEMENT ITSELF OR IN ITS NEGOTIATING HISTORY BETWEEN FULFILLMENT OF THIS OBLIGATION AND OTHER PROVISIONS YOU CANNOT RELIEVE YOURSELF OF THIS OBLIGATION BY YOUR ACTIONS WHICH IGNORED THE AGREEMENT. MOREOVER, WE DO NOT

NEED TO BASE OUR CLAIM FOR AN ACCOUNTING ON THE PARIS AGREEMENT, BUT HAVE AMPLE BASIS IN THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 TO WHICH THE DRV WAS A SIGNATORY, AND IN THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR. MY GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THIS MORAL AND LEGAL HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATION MUST BE FULFILLED BEFORE THERE CAN BE ANY FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES".

21. THE VIETNAMESE MAY CLAIM THEY HAVE MADE SEVERAL GESTURES OF GOODWILL TOWARD US WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN RECIPROCATED, THAT ON THE CONTRARY WE HAVE TAKEN HOSTILE
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STEPS SUCH AS THE TRADE EMBARGO AND THE UN VETO. YOU SHOULD REPLY: "WE HAVE WELCOMED CERTAIN VIETNAMESE ACTIONS SUCH AS THE RETURN OF AMERICANS STRANDED IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE RETURN OF A SMALL NUMBER OF REMAINS OF U.S. SERVICEMEN KILLED THERE, AND THE PROVISION OF A LIST OF 12 MIAS KILLED IN ACTION. HOWEVER, THESE ACTIONS DO NOT REPRESENT RESOLUTION OF THESE STRICTLY HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS. AT LEAST ONE ADULT AMERICAN CITIZEN AND A NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZEN CHILDREN REMAIN IN VIETNAM, AS DO THE CLOSE FAMILIES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. MOREOVER, YOUR ACTIONS IN REGARD TO INFORMATION ON THE REMAINS OF OUR MISSING AND DEAD ARE TRAGICALLY INCOMPLETE. FOR OUR PART, WE SEE NO UTILITY IN RECIPROCATING MINOR GESTURES ON YOUR PART. AS WE HAVE MADE PERFECTLY CLEAR, WE EXPECT AS COMPLETE AN ACCOUNTING AS POSSIBLE FOR OUR PERSONNEL AND WILL ACCEPT NOTHING LESS". WE TOO HAVE MADE GESTURES OF GOOD WILL.

22. SHOULD THE VIETNAMESE SUGGEST IMMEDIATE SPECIFIC STEPS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS, AFTER WHICH SUCH QUESTIONS AS MIAS CAN BE DISCUSSED, WE SHOULD REPLY: "WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO CONSIDER ANY FURTHER STEPS TOWARD IMPROVING OUR RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM IN THE ABSENCE OF A SATISFACTORY ACCOUNTING FOR OUR MISSING PERSONNEL. OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO NORMALIZATION COULD BE ADDRESSED AT A LATER STAGE ON THE BASIS OF THE MUTUAL BENEFIT AND TRUST WE SEEK AND EXPECT IN ANY NEW RELATIONSHIP".

23. THE VIETNAMESE MAY COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR THREATENED VETO OF THEIR APPLICATION FOR UN MEMBERSHIP AS AN UNWARRANTED LINKAGE OF THIS STRICTLY BILATERAL ISSUE TO THE MEMBERSHIP QUESTION. YOU SHOULD REPLY: "RESOLUTION OF THIS QUESTION WOULD INDICATE A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE HUMANITARIAN OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THIS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION. AS HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE CLEAR TO YOUR PERMANENT

OBSERVER IN NEW YORK, WE CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF AMERICANS UNACCOUNTED FOR IN VIETNAM TO BE BASIC TO OUR RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM. ONLY WHEN WE HAVE RECEIVED A SATISFACTORY ACCOUNTING FOR MIAS WILL WE CONSIDER WITHHOLDING OUR VETO WHEN THE QUESTION OF VIETNAMESE MEMBERSHIP

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IS RAISED IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. WE URGE YOU TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO MEET OUR CONCERNS".

24. THE VIETNAMESE MAY CLAIM THEY HAVE PROVIDED ALL MIA INFORMATION THEY HAVE AND THAT OUR EXPECTATION OF FURTHER INFORMATION IS NOT REALISTIC. YOU SHOULD REPLY ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

--"INCIDENTS DESCRIBED IN VIETNAMESE PUBLICATIONS AND

BROADCASTS LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT INFORMATION AS WELL AS REMAINS CAN BE RECOVERED IN MANY ADDITIONAL CASES.

--"THAT INFORMATION WAS RECOVERED ON THE LIST OF 12 PROVIDED US ON SEPTEMBER 6, ALL OF WHOM WERE LOST IN A 3-YR. PERIOD IN THE MID-1960'S, INDICATES THAT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON OTHERS LOST MUST ALSO BE AVAILABLE.

--"U.S. OFFICERS WERE SHOWN AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL GRAVESITE AT THE LOCATION WHERE THE 23 REMAINS WERE RETURNED IN 1974.

--"THE PRG LISTED THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. WE NEED ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH AND THE RETURN OF THEIR REMAINS. IN MARCH 1974, THE REMAINS OF THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN NORTH VIETNAM WERE RETURNED, BUT NO SUCH ACTION WAS TAKEN WITH THE REMAINS OF THOSE WHO DIED IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

--"IN ADDITION, THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE LOSS OF MANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS FURTHER LEADS US TO EXPECT THAT INFORMATION AS WELL AS REMAINS ARE AVAILABLE AND CAN BE PROVIDED. INFORMATION ON SOME OF THESE CASES HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN THE PAST, IN THE MEETINGS OF THE FPJMT, BY THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE, AND PERSONALLY BY SECRETARY KISSINGER."

25. IF THE VIETNAMESE INDICATE A WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE ON MIAS AND WANT TO KNOW SPECIFICALLY WHAT WE ARE SEEKING, YOU SHOULD REPLY: "WE HAVE ALREADY INDICATED

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WHAT WE WISH TO SEE PROVIDED -- I.E. ALL INFORMATION YOUR GOVERNMENT NOW HAS ABOUT OUR MISSING MEN, RETURN OF THE RECOVERABLE REMAINS OF THOSE WHO DIED, AND A THOROUGH SEARCH FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. WE ARE PREPARED TO OFFER TECHNICAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE AND TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH YOUR RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES OR THROUGH APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES ON THE LATTER. WE HAVE ALREADY PROVIDED YOUR GOVERNMENT WITH MATERIAL WHICH COULD ASSIST YOUR EFFORTS IN REGARD TO A NUMBER OF THE MISSING MEN, AS WELL AS COMPLETE LISTS OF ALL OUR MISSING PERSONNEL. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE RESULT OF THESE EFFORTS. WE CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON OTHER CASES IF THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL".

27. WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO CREATE IMPRESSION WE ARE PUTTING FORWARD ANOTHER PRECONDITION TO NORMALIZATION, WE WISH ALSO TO RAISE AT SOME POINT DURING MEETING THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AND IMMEDIATE RELATIVES STILL IN VIETNAM WHO WISH TO DEPART. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE FIND AN APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS INFORMALLY OUR CONCERN ABOUT FAMILIES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS SEPARATED BY RECENT EVENTS IN VIETNAM, AND REQUEST THAT SRV TAKE STEPS TO PERMIT AND EXPEDITE THE DEPARTURE OF THESE PERSONS, AS WELL AS THOSE FEW AMERICAN CITIZENS STILL REMAINING IN VIETNAM WHO WISH TO LEAVE.

28. REGARDING PRESS HANDLING, DCM SHOULD REITERATE TO VIETNAMESE AT END OF MEETING OUR VIEW THAT EACH SIDE SHOULD BE FREE TO CHARACTERIZE OR COMMENT ON THE MEETING AS IT WISHES, IN KEEPING WITH THE SERIOUS PURPOSE OF THE MEETING. HE SHOULD NOTE THAT, FOR OUR PART, WE INTEND TO CONFIRM THAT MEETING TOOK PLACE, THAT MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WERE DISCUSSED, AND THAT WE MADE CLEAR TO THE OTHER SIDE OUR PRIMARY CONCERN WAS AN ACCOUNTING FOR OUR MISSING MEN, WITHOUT WHICH FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS IS NOT POSSIBLE. WE MIGHT FURTHER COMMENT ON VIETNAMESE POSITION IN GENERAL TERMS ONLY. BEYOND CONFIRMING FACT OF MEETING (SEE BELOW), WE WOULD BE MAKING ANY COMMENT ON THE MEETING FROM WASHINGTON, NOT PARIS.

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29. EMBASSY SHOULD PROVIDE NO COMMENT OR BACKGROUND TO MEDIA PRIOR TO TALKS. ALL INQUIRIES SHOULD BE REFERRED TO DEPARTMENT. FOLLOWING MEETING, EMBASSY CAN RESPOND

IN FOLLOWING MANNER TO PRESS QUERIES: "WE CAN CONFIRM THAT TODAY (OR AS APPROPRIATE) THE DCM MET WITH THE COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY OF THE SRV. ISSUES OF INTEREST TO BOTH COUNTRIES WERE RAISED, WITH THE MIA ISSUE OUR PRIMARY CONCERN. ANY FURTHER COMMENTS WILL HAVE TO COME FROM WASHINGTON".
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